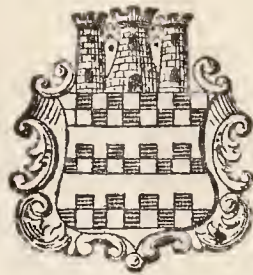


**BOROUGH OF OKEHAMPTON.**



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**OF THE**

**MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.**

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**1913.**

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# To the Okehampton Town Council.

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## Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1913.

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GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of submitting my 26th Annual Report as Medical Officer of Health for the Borough, and in doing so will follow the main headings of the scheme set out by the Local Government Board.

### A. Natural and Social Condition of the Borough.

(1). Okehampton is a small market town placed near the centre of the County of Devon, and on the northern border of the extensive granite upland of Dartmoor. The main and older part of the town is situated in a valley formed by the confluence of the West and East Okement, streams which arise on Dartmoor. The joined streams take a northern direction, and join the Torridge which enters the sea on the north coast of the county. The newer parts of the town, and several houses just outside the bounds of the Borough, are built on the slopes of the valley towards Dartmoor.

Geologically the older parts of the town are placed on an ancient river bed, excavations showing water-worn stones of various sizes down to gravel and sand. In two small areas there are patches of clay. The sides of the valley are composed of carboniferous slate, and on this formation most of the newer houses are being erected.

The area of the Borough is 502 acres, but the whole of this is not built over, and it includes the Park of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  acres presented some five years ago by Sydney Simmons, Esq.

(2). Population. At the census taken in 1911 the population was returned as 3175. Since 1881, when the population was 1695, there has been a steady increase in the growth of the town. For 1913 I estimate the population as 3250, a figure which I do not think far wrong. In this estimation I am not including the large number of visitors who come to the town for shorter or longer periods during the summer months. These make little or no show in our statistic tables, but they influence considerably our question of water supply, etc.

The social position of the permanent population is pretty much that of the small country town. There are a few people of independent means, but the bulk of the inhabitants have to work. There is very little real poverty in the town.

Quarries at Meldon (one for stone for ballast worked by the L. & S. W. Railway, and one for granulite worked by a private company), employ nearly 120 hands, the greater portion of whom live in the Borough. A boot and shoe factory employs some 40 hands, chiefly men and boys.



## B. Sanitary circumstances of the District.

**Water Supply.** This is derived from Dartmoor, a large proportion being taken from the Redaven stream just at the foot of Yes Tor. This is gravitated to filter beds, and from thence to the service reservoir, which also receives water from the "old supply," obtained from springs and subsoil drain-pipes in uncultivated moorland. This latter is not filtered. A third source of supply is also available in case of need, viz., the overflow from the Artillery Camp supply. This has been utilized for about a fortnight in September during the last two years. It is derived from a stream on Dartmoor close to the Redaven.

From the nature of the gathering ground there is little chance of pollution, but during the year information was brought to me that a dead horse on the moor was to be buried in our gathering ground. I at once made an inspection, and found that a pit had certainly been dug, but at a position which looked free from risk. However, to be on the safe side, I advised a new burial site, far below our collecting area.

The water supply is constant as a general rule, the exceptions being, that at certain periods, some of the higher houses are not satisfactorily supplied. This arises from the affected houses being so near the level of the reservoir that, when there is a large volume of water being drawn off at the lower levels, there is insufficient pressure to cause it to reach these high houses.

The Surveyor has received instructions from the Council to make examinations of the mains. Many have been down for a considerable number of years, and it is generally felt that improvement can be effected in this direction.

During the last two or three years the filtration of the Redaven water has received more attention, and there has been an improvement in the colour of the water; the nut brown tinge after heavy rains is not nearly so marked as formerly.

The plumbo-solvent action of the water when peaty has been discussed in so many previous reports, that I need only say that I have so far been unable to fix any injurious effect on the health of the consumers, probably due to the action being so intermittent.

**Streams.** No pollution of the two streams flowing through the town exists, and their beds are not disfigured by the broken pots and pans to the extent they used to be in the olden days.

**Sewerage and Sewage Disposal.** The town is well sewered on the whole. Owing to an extension of building operations in Crediton Road and East Street, extensions of sewers are needed in these directions.

In a few of the older cottages improvements in drainage are necessary, but these are receiving attention.

No complaint of the sewage field has reached me during the year.

**Closet Accommodation.** The pail closets in the Borough have now been reduced to two, and these are in a garden some distance from houses. In one of the courts the amount of w.c. accommodation is insufficient, but this court is being dealt with under the Housing Act. W.c.'s. without flushing cisterns are getting fewer and fewer, as the result of the action of the Town Council.

**Scavenging.** This is dealt with in the Inspector's Report.

**Sanitary Inspection of the District.** All of the Public Elementary Schools in the Borough are in a satisfactory state. All have adequate water supplies and closet accommodation. They are inspected by myself from time to time, independently of the visits made on account of infectious disease.

**Milk Supply.** The dairies and cowsheds have been inspected during the year. The dairies are generally clean, but I would again point out the advisability of protecting open milk vessels by means of muslin covers. This is done in some cases, but not in all.

One unsatisfactory cowshed has been shut up during the year, and a more suitable one obtained.

Tuberculosis is certainly rare in milch cows in this district, but I am not aware of any local tests that have been made to show the proportion of samples of milk in which the Tubercle bacillus can be detected.

**Other Foods.** From time to time inspections are made in the market of the meat, fish, etc., exposed for sale, and on my visits to the slaughterhouses the carcasses are examined. No case for action arose during the year, nor did I receive a single complaint. The slaughterhouses are generally kept in a clean condition, but now and then verbal notice as to limewashing has to be given. One or two of the older houses are in undesirable positions, but structurally are fair. Two of the slaughterhouses are well up to date, and of modern construction.

**Bakehouses.** These are inspected from time to time. Practically the whole of them are of modern construction and in good condition. Occasionally verbal notice for limewashing is necessary, but there is a great improvement in this respect.

**Housing.** As mentioned in my last two Annual Reports, the whole of the cottages in the Borough were inspected by myself in the latter part of 1910 and in 1911. Two courts were reported to you as being unsatisfactory, and two or three separate cottages. In addition, several of the older cottages showed defects, such as defective window space, poorly paved back yards, absence of flushing cisterns to w.c.'s, etc. I asked that a small committee be formed to inspect the worst places, and generally to deal with the matter under the Housing Acts. This committee was formed, and has met some seven or eight times, with the result that much good work has been done. One court of houses and one isolated cottage have been closed; alterations, repairs, etc., have been carried out in many other cases, and further orders are to be made.

No less than thirty-five cottages have been erected since 1910, all of which (except four not quite finished internally) are occupied. Plans for the erection of twelve more cottages have been passed recently, and there is little doubt that the work will shortly be carried out.



The proper housing of the working classes is a matter in which all creeds can join, and one that should be raised above all political strife. Good housing means better opportunities for both physical and moral development, and the nation at large has been educated up to that point. A steady progression on the lines taken up by you during the past two years will achieve much.

### C. Sanitary Administration of the District.

**Staff.** This is not large, consisting of the Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector (Mr. F. J. Worden) and myself.

There is no Hospital accommodation for infectious disease. I believe the County Council purposes the provision of an Isolation Hospital for a combination of Districts. This would be far preferable to having an Isolation Hospital on our own for many reasons. With rapid motor transit the conveyance of a "fever" patient for a few miles is a very minor matter.

We have no special local Acts, but the Council has adopted the Private Streets Works Act of 1891, and part of the Public Health Amendment Act of 1890. The Council is also proposing to adopt the whole or part of the Public Health Amendment Act of 1907.

One analysis of the Public Water Supply has been made during the year.

Bacterological work as regards Diphtheria has been carried out by the County Council, while the examinations for Tubercle bacilli have been made by myself for the most part.

### D. Prevalence of and control over Acute Infectious Diseases.

The following table gives the list of Acute Infectious Diseases notified during the year:—

Scarlet Fever	...	...	..	8.
Diphtheria	...	...	..	8.
Erysipelas	...	..	..	1.

**Scarlet Fever.** On four occasions this disease was introduced into the town during the year, but there was very little spreading. All the cases were of a mild type.

**Diphtheria.** During the year there has been a good deal of Diphtheria (generally of a mild type) in the Rural District, and as Okehampton is a centre for that District it was hardly to be expected that we should escape.

The first case occurred in the Workhouse on Oct. 15th. It was that of a girl of sixteen, who had been admitted the previous day from the parish of Bondleigh on account of illness. Evidently she was suffering from the disease on her arrival. I visited her home at Bondleigh. No case of the disease had occurred in that parish during the year, and none of the other children in the house were suffering from sore throat, etc. The patient made a good recovery.

On Oct. 27th a child aged 14 months was notified in North St. The disease was of the laryngeal type, and rapidly fatal. The next day an elder sister aged 13 years was notified. Here the disease ran a very mild course. As to the source of the disease, no definite conclusion could be arrived at. It is possible that both children contracted the disease at one and the same time, but it is more probable that the elder child contracted it from the infant, but no definite exposure history could be obtained to account for the earlier case. Although there were six other children in the house, no other case appeared here.

On Nov. 3rd a case was notified in Victoria St. The patient was a girl of 15, who was employed in domestic work. In this case also no history of exposure to infection could be obtained. There was, so far as one could judge, no apparent connection at all between this case and the previous.

The next case was notified on Nov. 14th, and was that of a female shopkeeper, aged 58. Here also the disease spread to the larynx, and proved fatal. Here also no source of infection could be traced. It was on the side of the town remote from the other cases.

On Nov. 23rd a child aged 13 was notified in North St. This child certainly had played with unaffected children from the house of the earliest cases, and presumably had received infection from there. The case was mild.

The next case was notified on Dec. 13th. It was that of a young domestic servant in a private house. It was of mild type.

The last case was notified on Dec. 26th, and occurred in a dressmaker aged 18. It also was mild in type.

I have entered rather fully into the outbreak, as diphtheria is by no means common in Okehampton. For the 11 years preceding June, 1910, not a single case had been notified. In that year 3 cases occurred in one house, and a solitary case in another house. In 1911 there were 4 cases notified. No case was notified in 1912.

The outbreak also shows us that very much yet remains to be learned of the natural history of the disease causing bacillus both outside the human body as well as when growing on some part of the body.

The question of milk infection was gone into with a negative result; not only were the milk supplies from 3 or 4 sources, but the incidence in time of the cases was against it.

No infective influence could be attached to the School; only 2 of the patients were of school age, and these were precisely the only 2 cases that definite or indefinite histories of exposure to infection could be obtained, and in both instances it was apart from the school.

In all instances disinfection was carried out on the termination of the case, and antitoxin was supplied by the Authority.

**Measles.**—A few cases of measles occurred in the autumn. The type was very mild.

Bacteriological aids to diagnosis are carried out by the County Council, and were used in certain of the diphtheria cases.



No case of enteric fever was notified during the year, and there was very little incidence of infantile diarrhoea, and none that I saw of a severe type. No case of food poisoning came under observation.

Poliomyelitis and cerebro spinal fever were absent.

### **E. Prevalence of and Control over Tuberculosis.**

During the year 8 cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis, and one of Tuberculosis of Bone were notified. On receipt of a notification the case is visited unless the Medical Attendant expresses a wish to the contrary. Weekly returns of the notifications are made to the County Medical Officer of Health, and the cases are then visited by the County Tuberculosis Officer, who meets the Medical Attendant and advises as to the general treatment, etc. Contacts are also examined. Subsequent visits to follow up the cases are invariably made.

Disinfection is carried out on the termination of the cases, and even during their progress if thought desirable.

One case of Pulmonary Tuberculosis in a National Insurance patient was sent to Didworthy Sanatorium, with a beneficial result.

Examinations for the Tubercle Bacillus are made both by the County Council bacteriologist and myself.

### **F. Investigation of other Diseases.**

Apart from the incidence of disease mentioned under D, there was no marked prevalence of any special disorder. Rickets is not very common, and then only of small degree.

Acute Rheumatism is decidedly uncommon, although during the year there was one fatal case from associated complications.

Diarrhoea and Enteritis were practically absent. Of late years they have formed very small factors in our death rates.

There were a few cases of Influenza, but the disease never took on a severe or epidemic type.

Gonorrhoea and Syphilis are not common, although during six months in the year a large military camp lies just outside the town. Bacteriological examination is made by myself for the detection of the diseases where necessary.

### **G. Means for Preventing Mortality in Child-birth and Infancy.**

There is only one certified midwife in the Borough, and that is the District Nurse. The old fashioned midwife (both registered and un-registered) has died out. The midwife is inspected by the lady inspector of the County Council.

No fatal case of child-birth, and no case of Puerperal Fever occurred during the year.

The District Nurse acts as a Health Visitor.

No case of Ophthalmia Neonatorum was notified.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

Population, 1911	..	...	3175.
Population (estimated) 1913	...		3250.

**Births.**—There were 64 births registered in the Borough, 32 males and 32 females ; of these, 9 (3 males and 6 females) took place in the Workhouse, and were illegitimate. The total birth rate was 19·0 per 1000, but by subtracting the births in the Workhouse, which properly belong to the Rural District (6 in number), we have the net number of births 58. This gives a birth rate of 17·8 per 1000. The corresponding rate last year was 24·6.

**Deaths.**—42 deaths were registered in the Borough, 23 males and 19 females. These include 9 deaths (8 males and 1 female) which occurred in the Workhouse, only 1 male of which belonged to the Borough, the remainder belonged to the Rural District. The total death rate is 12·9 per 1000, but the corrected rate estimated by excluding the deaths of non-residents is 10·4 per 1000. No death of a resident outside the Borough has been reported to me. The corrected death rate (10·4) for 1913 is practically the same as in 1912, when it was 10·3 per 1000.

**Infantile Mortality.**—Only 3 deaths of infants under 1 year of age were registered, and 1 of these was of a non-resident in the Workhouse. The corrected rate per 1000 births is therefore 33·9 per 1000 births. This is a very low rate.

**Zymotic Death Rate.**—There were 2 deaths due to Diphtheritic Laryngitis, giving the zymotic death rate of ·6 per 1000.

**Tuberculosis.**—There were 4 deaths due to Pulmonary Tuberculosis, and 1 to Tubercular Meningitis, as compared with only 1 of the former and 1 of the latter in 1912.

**Cancer.**—Only 1 death was attributed to this disease.

**Bronchitis** caused 3 deaths and **Pneumonia** 1.

**Drowning.**—There were 2 deaths due to drowning; 1 was returned at the Coroner's inquest as suicidal, and the other was returned as "insufficient evidence as to how the drowning was brought about."

**Child-birth.**—No death was due to child-birth.

Appended are the various Tables of the Local Government Board, the Report of the Sanitary Inspector, and the Rainfall, kindly provided by the Mayor (General E. H. Holley).

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

**EDWARD H. YOUNG, M.D., D.P.H.,**

Med. Officer of Health.

Okehampton,  
Jan., 16th, 1914.



## TOWN HALL, OKEHAMPTON,

January 7th, 1914.

Dear Sir,

I beg herewith to send you my general report on Sanitary matters for the past year (1913).

**Water Supply.**—The position as regards Water Supply has been similar in most respects to the previous three or four years, and the particulars are shortly as follows:—The Supply during the dry months of the summer has been equal to about 45 gallons per head, and the only difficulty experienced has been in supplying the highest levels,—above the Station, East St. and Prospect Hill,—and in order to satisfy the needs of the people living in those parts, it has been found necessary to shut off the water from the lower parts at stated times during the day and night.

It was thought that a considerable quantity of water was used for trade purposes, and the Council decided to put in two meters for the purpose of ascertaining the amount used, and a further report will be made when the test has been completed.

During the year the main has been extended in East St., several valves have been repaired or renewed, and a good sum spent in repairs to the works. The filter beds have been repaired, and a pipe laid to connect up the overflow from Camp reservoirs. By carrying out this latter work, the existing supply is supplemented by from 5000 to 15000 gallons per day.

The Council have now under consideration the question of inspecting and, if necessary, scraping the mains, some of which have been laid for over 40 years, and I have had instructions to gradually make tests and to collect information relating to this work for the purpose of laying a fuller report before the Council.

**Cowsheds and Dairies.**—Apart from the usual and periodical limewashing, no further structural improvements have been made.

**Workshops and Bakeries.**—Generally speaking, these premises are kept in a fairly clean condition, but it has been necessary to give notices in respect to one workshop and one bakery to do limewashing.

**Slaughter-houses.**—There are 5 private slaughter-houses in the Borough, and these I have occasionally inspected. No complaint has been received by me as to nuisances.

**Housing.**—The Committee of the members of the Council have from time to time dwelt with reports, and have given instructions for the service of notices on owners to carry out repairs or abate nuisances, and as a result of a meeting held in December, 11 further notices were issued.

Since the Housing and Town Planning, Etc., Act, 1909, came into force, a great deal of improvement has been made, in sanitary matters, to houses for the working classes, but the Council still have to deal with the courts off East St. and St. James's St., and it is hoped that during the coming year much will be done.

Since the year 1910, 12 new cottages have been built in Painter's Court, 4 in Castle Lane (in course of erection). 2 East Street, 12 North St, 5 Crediton Lane,—making a total of 35. All these have been built by private enterprise, and it has not yet been considered necessary, by the Council, to embark on a Housing Scheme.

**Sewage Disposal.**—At the outfall works everything appears to be going on satisfactorily, with the usual amount of attention by the workmen. New channels have been cut and formed to meet the requirements of the tenant, and the ditches, where overflows took place, have been cleaned out.

The sewers in the town are in a fair condition, considering that they have been in use about 25 years, and the usual amount of attention has been given to flushing, etc. Two new manholes have been laid in Crediton Lane, and connections have been made to take the drainage from 17 houses or w.c.'s in various parts of the town. The proposed extensions of sewers in East St. and Crediton Lane are still in abeyance.

**Refuse Collection and Disposal.**—The number of loads of house and street refuse collected by the Council's workmen during the year amounts to 2129 loads, an average of 177 loads per month. The figures for the previous year (1912) were 1958 and 163 respectively. From this it will be seen that the work in this department is steadily increasing.

As stated in my previous reports, there is need for more improvement in the provision (by householders) of properly covered receptacles for the refuse, as the following figures will shew:—two (2) fixed ash-pits, sixty (60) galvanised bins with covers, four hundred and thirty (430)! buckets, pails, barrels, wood boxes, etc., without proper coverings.

The refuse is at present carted, and deposited in a field in the eastern end of town.

**Public Conveniences.**—There are only two public conveniences in the town, one in the Market and the other in Simmons Park (recently erected and given to the town by Sydney Simmons, Esq.) There is undoubtedly need for similar erections in the town, and one at least for each sex should be provided.

**Plans** have been approved during the year for:—Additions to house, East Parade, 1 House in East St., 1 Bungalow in East St., 1 Stable, etc., North St., 11 Cottages, Higher Mill Lane, 2 Houses, Station Road, 1 House, Crediton Lane, Alterations to premises, West St. A New Drill Hall at the end of Kempley Road is nearing completion.

Yours faithfully,

**FRANCIS J. WORDEN,**

Borough Surveyor.

To Dr. E. H. Young, M.D., D.P.H.,

Medical Officer of Health,  
Okehampton.



## RAINFALL IN 1913.

Taken at Oaklands by MAJOR-GENERAL E. H. HOLLEY.

MONTH.	Total Depth.	Greatest fall in 24 hours.		No. of days with .01 in. or more in 24 hrs
	INCHES.	INCHES.	DATE.	
JANUARY ...	7.93	1.09	4th	29
FEBRUARY ...	1.79	.60	7th	9
MARCH ...	6.77	.86	16th	22
APRIL ...	5.73	1.34	26th	19
MAY ...	2.43	.57	2nd	14
JUNE ...	2.22	.77	5th	9
JULY ...	.79	.22	5th	8
AUGUST ...	1.41	.67	31st	8
SEPTEMBER	1.90	.45	4th	14
OCTOBER ...	4.80	.77	30th	20
NOVEMBER ...	5.96	.95	11th	25
DECEMBER ...	5.10	1.07	5th	16
Total ...	46.83			193

Remarks ... Rainfall about the average.

# Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1913 and previous Years.

Name of District      ...      Okehampton Borough.

Year	Population estimated to middle of each year	Births				Total Deaths registered in the District		Transferable Deaths		Nett Deaths belonging to the District			
		Un-correct'd Number	Nett		Under 1 year of age					At all ages			
			Number	Rate	Of Non-residents registered in the District	Of Residents not registered in the District	Number	Rate per 1000 Nett Births	Number	Rate			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
1908	3000	81			37	12.3							
1909	3050	71			48	15.7							
1910	3100	61			54	17.4							
1911	3175	86			32	10.0	7	3	6	73.1	28	8.8	
1912	3200	79	79	24.6	39	12.1	8	2	2	25.3	33	10.3	
1913	3250	64	58	17.8	42	12.9	8	0	2	33.9	34	10.4	

Area of District in Acres (land and inland water)
} 502.

Total population at all ages ... 3175
Number of inhabited houses ... 652
Average number of persons per house ... 4.8

At Census, 1911, (cf. Census, Vol. V.



Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the Year 1913.

Name of District ... .. Okehampton Borough.

Notifiable Disease.	Number of Cases notified.					
	At all Ages	At Ages—Years.				
		1 and under 5 years	5 and under 15 years	15 and under 25 years	25 and under 45 years	45 and under 65 years
Diphtheria (including Membranous croup ...	8	1	2	4		1
Erysipelas ... ..	1					1
Scarlet Fever ... ..	8	1	4	1	2	
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ...	8			4	4	
Other forms of Tuberculosis	1			1		
Totals ... ..	26	2	6	10	6	2

Total Cases removed to Hospital ... .. None.  
Isolation Hospital or Hospitals, Sanatoria, etc. ... None.

## Causes of, and Ages at Death during the Year 1913.

Name of District      ...      Okehampton Borough.

Causes of Death.  1	Nett Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents" whether occurring within or without the District.									Total Deaths whether of "Residents" or "Non-residents" in Institutions in the District 11
	All Ages 2	Under 1 year 3	1 and under 2 years 4	2 and under 5 years 5	5 and under 15 years 6	15 and under 25 years 7	25 and under 45 years 8	45 and under 65 years 9	65 and upwards 10	
All causes { Certified ... Uncertified	34	2	2	1	1	3	4	8	13	8
Diphtheria and Croup ...	2		1					1		
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	4					2	2			3
Tuberculosis Meningitis	1					1				
Cancer, malignant disease	1								1	
Rheumatic Fever ...	1				1					
Organic Heart Disease...	4							2	2	
Bronchitis ...	3							1	2	
Pneumonia (all forms)...	1		1							
Other diseases of respiratory organs	1			1						
Congenital Debility and Malformation, including Premature Birth										1
Violent Deaths, excluding Suicide	1						1			
Suicide ...	1							1		
Other Defined Diseases	14	2					1	3	8	4
Totals ...	34	2	2	1	1	3	4	8	13	8



## INFANTILE MORTALITY DURING THE YEAR 1913.

Nett Deaths from stated causes at various ages under 1 year of age.

Causes of Death.		3 months and under 6 months.	Total Deaths under 1 year
All causes {	Certified ...	2	2
	Uncertified ...		
Convulsions ...		1	1
Atrophy, Debility and Marasmus ...		1	1
Totals ...		2	2

Nett Births in the year, legitimate	...	56
"    "    illegitimate	...	3
Nett Deaths in the year of legitimate infants		2
"    "    illegitimate infants		0

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1913, for the Borough of Okehampton, on the administration of the Factory & Workshop Act, 1901, in connection with Factories, Workshops, Workplaces and Homework.

### 1.—Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces, Including Inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances.

Premises.	Number of Inspections.
<b>Workshops</b> ... (Including Workshop Laundries)	2
<b>Workplaces</b> ... (Other than Outworkers' premises included in Part 3 of this Report)	18
Total ...	20

### 2.—Defects Found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Particulars.	Number of Defects.	
	Found	Remedied
Nuisances under the Public Health Acts : } Want of cleanliness ... }	1	1

Total Number of Workshops on Register 18.

